

Message Text

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SUBJECT: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

1. PSYCHOLOGICAL: THE ELECTION FEVER HAS BEEN BUILDING--IN THE MASS MEDIA HERE, BUT NOT SO OBVIOUSLY AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC. THE MAJOR MEDIA OUTLETS HAVE ALMOST ALL REPORTED ON THEIR RECENT POLITICAL OPINION SURVEYS OF VOTER PREFERENCES AND CABINET SUPPORT, WHICH GENERALLY PREDICT SOME DIET SEAT LOSSES FOR THE LDP AND GAINS FOR THE KOMEITO, COMMUNISTS AND KOHNO-LED NEW LIBEAL CLUB, AND WHICH FIND A NEW SLUMP IN CABINET SUPPORT BELOW THE 30 PERCENT LEVEL. AS A SIGNIFICANT INDICATOR OF HOW FAR PUBLIC OPINION HAS FORCED THE JCP TO MODIFY ITS STATED POLICIES, THE 12/2 MORNING PRESS REPORTED THAT JCP SECRETARY GENERAL MIYAMOTO HAS SAID THAT AN OPPOSITION-PARTY COALITION GOVERNMENT COULD SHELVE THE US-JAPAN SECURITY TREATY ISSUE WHILE MORE PRESSING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MEASURES WERE BEING DEALT WITH. AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, THE FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE SECURITY TREATY IS THEREBY PUSHED IN A MORE FAVORABLE DIRECTION-- EVEN THOUGH THIS PROBABLY IS AN ELECTION TACTIC AND THE MOOTED OPPOSITIONISTS' COALITION GOVERNMENT IS NOT SEEN LIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUES ACCORDED PROMINENT ATTENTION INCLUDED THE EC DELIBERATIONS ON RESTRAINING JAPANESE IMPORTS AND THE USG'S PROPOSAL FOR TALKS WITH JAPAN ON CURBING JAPANESE STEEL EXPORTS TO THE U.S. AN IMPORTANT POLICY SHIFT THAT PROVOKED SOBER COMMENTARY WAS THE GOJ'S UNOFFICIAL HINTS THAT JAPAN WOULD NOW ACCEPT THE MAIN U.S. DEMANDS ON THE FISHERY ISSUE BECAUSE THE USSR HAS DONE SO. THE POST HOPES THAT ITS INFORMATION EFFORT OF THE PAST FOUR MONTHS PLAYED SOME SMALL PART IN MAKING THIS POLICY SHIFT POSSIBLE FOR THE GOJ.

2. PROGRAM.

A. ECONOMICS MPP: IN JUST OVER TWO WEEKS OF PROGRAMMING, THE THREE ASP SPEAKERS IN OUR ECONOMICS MAJOR PACKAGED PROGRAM HAD IN-DEPTH DISCUSSIONS WITH NEARLY 500 FELLOW PROFESSIONALS: GOVERNMENT, ACADEMIC AND BUSINESS ECONOMISTS, MEDIA ECONOMIC WRITERS AND OFFICIALS FROM NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND JAPAN'S BUSINESS WORLD. THE CONTENT RANGED BROADLY ACROSS MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING THE ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DEVELOP MORE HARMONIOUS AND PRODUCTIVE NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS. IN A NUMBER OF THE SESSIONS, AT OUR OWN AMERICAN CENTERS AND IN JAPANESE INSTITUTIONS, THE SUBJECT MATTER SEEMED, IN FACT, TOO BROAD--INDICATING THAT WE MIGHT HAVE DONE BETTER BY MORE NARROWLY LIMITING THE MPP'S SCOPE IN ORDER TO BETTER SATISFY THE INTELLECTUAL NEEDS OF THE DIALOGUE GENERATED. SOME AUDIENCES DISPLAYED INTENSE INTEREST IN THE SPEAKERS' ESTIMATES OF HOW THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION MIGHT ALTER U.S. ECONOMIC POLICIES, AND WERE LESS THAN FULLY SATISFIED WITH THE SPEAKERS' GENERAL PARRYING OF THESE QUESTIONS, AS REQUESTED BY THE MISSION. REPORTS FROM THE AC'S INDICATE THAT PROFESSORS ALIBER AND SANDERSON WERE PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE BOTH IN THEIR LEAD-OFF PRESENTATIONS AND IN DISCUSSION, WHILE WOODBURY'S PRESENTATIONS TENDED TO BE SOMEWHAT GENERAL IN CONTRAST TO HIS MORE INFORMATIVE AND EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE IN DISCUSSION. THE EMBASSY'S ALBERT NOONAN WAS VALUABLE IN SAPPORO WITH ALIBER AND NAGOYA WITH SANDERSON AS CO-SPEAKER AND MODERATOR RESPECTIVELY.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ENTIRE MPP WERE THE OPENING SESSION AT TOKYO AC, WHICH SOME 150 LEADING JAPANESE ECONOMISTS AND OFFICIALS ATTENDED, AND A DAY AND A HALF SEMINAR NEAR MOUNT FUJI WHICH UNCLASSIFIED

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ENABLED SOME 25 JAPANESE PARTICIPANTS TO HAVE EXTENDED DISCUSSION SESSIONS WITH ALL THREE AMERICAN SPEAKERS.

AT A TIME WHEN JAPANESE ECONOMISTS ARE PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS FOR AN UPDATED VIEW OF ECONOMIC THINKING IN AMERICA, THE MPP SERVED WELL TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEM AND U.S. ECONOMISTS WHICH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITH A WHOLE SERIES OF VISITING SPEAKERS EARLIER THIS YEAR. EFFORTS BY OUR PRESS OFFICE ALSO HAVE PRODUCED

GOOD NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE ASP'S VIEWS.

B. KIM ON THE KOREAN QUESTION: FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR PROF. ILPYONG KIM SPOKE AT TOKYO AC ON "THE KOREAN QUESTION IN THE CONTEXT OF SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS." AMONG THE 89 PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE WERE MANY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SPECIALISTS. HE EXPLAINED THE HISTORY OF THE KOREAN PROBLEM, CURRENT DIFFICULTIES, AND SUGGESTED THAT JAPAN WOULD BE EXPECTED TO BE A "COMMUNICATION BRIDGE" BETWEEN ROK AND NORTH KOREA. AUDIENCE ACTIVE RESPONSE DURING THE QUESTION PERIOD REFLECTED THEIR CONCERN OVER THE WHOLE KOREAN MATTER.

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